

THE CORRESPONDENT.

MAGNA EST VERITAS ET PREVALEBIT.

No. 21.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 15, 1827.

VOL. 2.

CORRESPONDENCE.

FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

Mr. Editor—It appears by the newspapers, that, at a recent trial for ejectment, at Providence, Rhode Island, the testimony of two witnesses was rejected on the ground of their disbelief in a future state of rewards and punishments. One of them is said to have received his disbelief from Paine's Age of Reason. How a disbelief in a future state could be obtained from Mr. Paine's works, I am at a loss to conceive, as Mr. Paine believed in the affirmative.

On a late trial in England, a bookseller charged a man with stealing books out of his store. The defendant's counsel asked the plaintiff if he believed in a future state of rewards and punishments. He answered in the negative; but that nevertheless he considered himself bound to tell the truth. The counsel said, we cannot admit your evidence. The judge then asked him if he believed Jesus Christ to be the son of God. The plaintiff answered, no: Then, said the judge, we must reject your evidence. So the thief would have been set at liberty had it depended on the plaintiff's testimony. The plaintiff lost his property, and an encouragement was afforded to rob him again, because he did not believe in future punishments, and Jesus Christ to be the son of God! It is not my intention to go into history to show the origin of future punishments; nor how many nations have entertained that belief; but I will attempt to show the absurdity, the cruelty, and the injurious effects of it.

It would appear from the language of Christians, that a man can believe as he pleases; that he can conform to any system of faith. But ask a methodist if he can believe in the doctrine of *election* and *reprobation*? Ask a protestant if he can believe in *transubstantiation*, in *purgatory*, and in the *vicegerency of the pope*? And ask a Christian if he can believe in the *Koran*, and that Mahomet was a *prophet of God*? They will all undoubtedly and emphatically answer, no. We believe agreeably to the impressions made upon us by education, reading, observation, conversation, &c. If I change my belief, it will arise from what I deem stronger evidence than that which I possess, and not from my will: if my will has any thing to do in the matter, it arises from the evidence to which it conforms.

If a belief in a future state is the only or the principal criterion, why do we employ so many men, who are occupied several months in a year making, altering, and amending numerous laws to compel men to be honest; and yet, after all, what a mass of evil exists in Christian communities. Look at the bargains, intrigues, and corruptions of those in power,

from the highest in office to the most subordinate clerk ; and at the wars, oppression, and tyranny of statesmen. The men who commit these evils are those who manifest an ardent attachment to Bible and missionary societies. These are the men who persecute and punish all who think that morality is superior to faith, and virtuous actions most pleasing to God. The fact is, a man who believes in future punishments may gamble, drink, defraud, and oppress, and his testimony be admitted in a court of judicature ; while a man who *cannot* believe in future punishment, yet is honest and virtuous, must not have justice and the benefit of the law.

But Christians are inconsistent, or they consider each other as incapable of telling the truth, except when kissing the Bible; for when one of them comes into a court of justice, however well known his faith may be, he is not only compelled to swear what he asserts is true, but he is examined and cross examined. The judges, jury, and counsel observe if there is any change in his countenance, tone, manner, &c., to detect him in a falsehood. Why do this with one who believes in future punishment? The anti-future punishment men might show sufficient objections against the doctrine from the want of unanimity of their opponents, not only in the mode of punishment, but in the extension of it. But future punishments do not deter men in the commission of crimes. It is good laws, education, public opinion, vigilance in others, &c. that make men virtuous. As an instance of the truth of what I assert, I will suppose a case: A man goes into a store, having an imperfect knowledge of the value of the goods which he wishes to purchase. Will not the storekeeper (I speak in general terms, as it is highly probable there are honest storekeepers) take advantage of the man's ignorance, and charge him more than one who knows the value of the goods? Every experienced man will answer, yes. In this case *future punishments*, and not the law, is concerned. But this storekeeper dare not put his hand into the man's pocket and take out even a cent, because this would subject him to the punishment of the *law*.

The cruelty of future punishments, as laid down in the Bible and by its commentators, forms an insuperable objection to every man who considers the subject rationally. We are told by one party that it consists in a guilty conscience; which pain is described as unbearable: "a wounded conscience who can bear?" Our consciences are not equally affected at the commission of the same act. One man feels very little remorse in the commission of a great crime; while another of weak nerves is easily affected at committing a trifling fault. Another party believes that the soul will burn without end in fire and brimstone, unless we *repent* and believe Jesus Christ was the *son of God!* An idea naturally occurs, how the human mind could believe in a punishment so improbable, so cruel in its nature, and so extensive in its duration: but, alas! the human mind is as capable of receiving erroneous impressions as correct ones, and interested and ignorant men have created a system of terror; the former to live on the labor of others, and the latter from an idea that the human race cannot be virtuous without being educated in *fear*. Hence the idea of future punishments; and hence the zeal and anxiety of Christians to enforce this erroneous belief in all their schools. The

god of the Jews and Christians is represented in the Bible as one "whose tender mercies are over all his works;" but I am at a loss to know how he is merciful, when he consigns his children for a trifling and finite fault to endless flames, and when the devil, who tempts and draws them into evil, has the pleasure of punishing them for it. If man is weak, why permit the devil, who commenced evil, and that, too, in heaven, to tempt him? If he is not weak, not prone to evil, why make him so? Why produce evil from good? I know it will be said that temptation is necessary to make trial of man, and that this life is probationary. If God knows all things, does he not know what man will do? And would it not be better that he should not be tempted, seeing that "many go in at the broad gate, which leadeth unto destruction; while few go in at the straight one which leadeth unto life eternal?"

By the Bible we are led to conclude that God is unfeeling; a being without pity and without mercy. See the parable of the rich man in hell, Luke 16—24, 25. Suppose a man in civilized life lay certain injunctions on his son, that if he does not observe them he shall be afflicted with terrible punishments; and suppose this son, from his weakness, cannot fulfil these injunctions, and the father commences the infliction of this terrible punishment; the child, with all its feelings and tenderness, entreats him as a father, as a being who knows its weakness, and the severity of the punishment, to release him: would that father be so unfeeling, so obdurate, and so destitute of affection [I appeal to every man who is a father] as not to forgive him? I answer, no. If man, then, would not be so destitute of feeling, how can we expect the father of the human race would, whose love and mercy are so far superior to those of man? Perhaps some Christian will ask, "Why, then, did Junius Brutus condemn his own son?" The obvious answer is, because he had violated the laws, in conspiring against the liberties of his country. The judge acted agreeably to law, because he was *under* it. But suppose he had had the power and had pardoned his son, what would have been the consequence? Every ambitious and daring innovator on the liberties of his country might urge the case of young Brutus as his own, and that, too, with justice. This would lead to the destruction of freedom and peace in every country; anarchy, disorder, and bloodshed in every state.

But what evil will arise from man *not* being punished in a future state? It cannot injure God; it cannot injure the human race; it can injure nothing; but, on the contrary, it will produce much good. To punish must be the offspring of revenge. If a man has committed a crime, he is punished for two reasons; first, that it may have a salutary influence on his future conduct; and, second, sometimes, that it may serve as an example to others, though the latter is unjust. If this life is a state of trial, when a man dies he has past it; consequently, punishment after death cannot have any influence on his actions, nor can it serve as an example to others, for I apprehend no one will say there are *two* states of trial. Had God not deemed the punishment we receive through life sufficient, he, in order to deter us from committing evil, ought (if he had *not* the power to do otherwise) to have punished us severely *previous* to our committing evil. This might have had the desired effect, though it would have been a strange kind of justice. Future punishments are in-

jurious to the best interests of society; they have caused millions to be the easy dupes of impostors, who have been and are considered as "a sort of turnpike gate to heaven;" for I seldom or never knew a man or woman, who were on good terms with their priest, who did not consider their soul in a good state. These men have extorted confessions from ignorant persons; dived into the private affairs of families; but, what is most to be lamented, they have obtained the ascendancy over statesmen and rulers, and induced them to enter into religious wars, crusades, massacres, &c., of which history furnishes a melancholy catalogue. Had it not been for future punishments, they never could have obtained the ascendancy.

Future punishments are unjust, because they do not agree either in duration or nature with the offence. What proportion can infinity bear to what is finite? and what proportion do our vices and follies bear to endless torments? To burn a child for stealing a cent's worth of ginger cake would be mercy compared to it! because our senses and our faculties sometimes deceive us. How many actions of a man's life can be called exclusively his own? that is, that are not influenced, directly or indirectly, by his fellow beings. A dense society is like one vast chain, and each individual a link in that chain.

"From Nature's chain, whatever link you strike,
Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike."

Man should have been created capable of *distinguishing* good from evil in all the circumstances of his life. His nature should have been free from any *inclination* to vice and folly; and he should have been capable of *resisting* evil in whatever form it presented itself. So that if he had sinned after being thus created, his punishment should be in proportion to his crimes, and thus deter him from committing injuries and make compensation for those already committed.

In conclusion, whatever influence future punishments might have on the minds of its believers, it lessens its effects by the doctrine of forgiveness of sins. A whole life is frequently spent in vice and injustice, and then, when sickness comes, that death is likely to ensue, "repent and be baptized," "repent and believe, and thou shalt be saved," and "though your sins be as scarlet they shall be made as white as snow," come into the mind and give it relief; and this doctrine of the forgiveness of sins frequently eases the consciences of those few (if there are any) who believe in and would be deterred by future punishments. Thus I have attempted to show the absurdity, the injustice, the cruelty, and the injurious effects of future punishments. In whatever way this article will be received by you and your readers I cannot conceive. The opinions contained in it are my own. How far they are correct I leave to others. I should like to see an article on this subject from the pen of "*Philo Veritas.*"

Philadelphia, December 4, 1827.

JULIAN.

THE REV. MR. SHULTZ.

Sir—This gentleman, it appears, has come forth with what he doubtless considers a successful defence against the charge of obscurity and

inconsistency in some of his former writings, as published in the *Correspondent*. I assure him, with much sincerity, that I am truly sorry he has made an abortive attempt: it is, in fact, a truly *Christian* defence, nothing but a mass of quibble and subterfuge. Where, except in the vocabulary, or at least the practice, of *priests*, (the abomination of Mr. Shultz,) shall we be able to find the difference between *actual* and *historical* facts? He parades before us a long, imposing string of what he terms *facts*, and when it is shown that these same *facts* contradict each other, in conformity with the practice of his brethren Christian priests, commentators, and translators, he discovers a different meaning to the word, shrinks from his position, and tells us—what? why, that facts are not—facts. A most logical and *satisfactory* demonstration, to be sure! As to the work which he styles his “Triumph of Truth,” I have not seen it; nor, from this last display of his reasoning, do I expect any advantage, any approximation towards truth, the great object in view, would be obtained by its perusal. A word or two respecting the new title, *priest*, with which I am dubbed: on this head I must say,

“You have an aspect, sir, of monstrous wisdom.”

I am persuaded that no one who looked over the few remarks which have produced Mr. Shultz’s animadversions considered me to be a *priest*, save that *reverend* gentleman himself. But, as *priests* and *priestcraft* seem to be his “tormenting fiends,” his right to be justified in the mistake is fully equal to Don Quixotte’s when he attacked the windmill, supposing it to be a castle and the abode of giants. To enlighten his obscure vision on this point, I will tell him distinctly that am *not* a priest; that I am not a Christian, (as he *appears* to be,) and that his “simple system of religion,” of which he speaks, is to my view most complex, absurd, and unsusceptible of proof, richly entitling him to the appellation of priest and priest-ridden. I also, it is true, believe in a god. But what is that god? By no means the god of whom Moses tells us such marvellous tales. What are his attributes? How does he make known to us his existence? What influence—what interference does he have with or upon us? Here, Mr. Shultz, is the grand question: this is the important point to decide at the outset; and, as you have been the first to publish your creed, I leave to you the honor and glory of first describing the god in whom you profess a belief. In doing this I hope you will speak plain English: let us have no Christianity or priestianity: assert nothing which cannot reasonably be inferred, or which you can neither prove nor any other person understand. If you execute this task to my satisfaction, or that of any other such priest as I am, then will I subscribe a willing belief in all your facts, whether *actual* or *historical*.

I am charged with misquoting the language used in one of Mr. Shultz’s *facts*. We may consider this an honorable, at least a very convenient, way of surmounting the difficulty which presented itself; but it is certainly one which cannot avail; and I repeat my expression of regret that he should resort to such shuffling expedients, so much in the style and manner of the *veracious* and *learned* conductors of the *Antidote*. I shall not occupy the space required for transcribing the passage, but I assert that I have *not* misquoted his assumed fact, No. 171.

After the denial by Mr. Shultz of his belief in the authenticity of the Old and New Testaments, in vain do I look around for even the shadow of an excuse in his behalf, when he introduces in his last communication such passages as the following: "all the Jews and Christians admit that Adam and Eve were the first pair of mortals;" "and so with all the other patriarchs, including Moses and the Jews;" "if we admit, *as is generally the case*, that we are all the offspring of one pair of mortals;" "if the first pair were created in infancy;" "if, therefore, the first pair were created in manhood, *as is generally believed*," &c. &c. Here we have enough in all conscience to convince us that the writer places implicit confidence in the Mosaic fables, and to justify me in repeating the question of the "old lady," "Which side is he fighting for?" It is true, he speaks hypothetically, (as indeed he does throughout the greater part of the article,) but it is evident he advances these propositions as being in accordance with his own opinion, and assumes them as data for the conclusions he wishes to establish. Of course, I pretend not to dictate to any man what belief he should hold on these points; but I think it is any or every man's right, if he choose to exercise it—the pointing out such bold, unblushing, and uncalled for inconsistency. In conclusion, I take the liberty of advising Mr. Shultz to seek for refuge in the "sinner receiving" and "soul saving" doctrines of methodism, where he will have a glorious opportunity of proclaiming his unshaken faith in a future state of rewards and punishments; *alias* taking a warm bath in a lake of fire and brimstone, or singing hallelujahs to all eternity.

I am, sir, yours,

S.

New York, Dec. 5, 1827.

THE FANATIC AND THE LIBERAL.

"**Y**ou are an infidel, and ought to be hanged—you are odious to God and man"—said a pious believer in the redemption of the world from the sin of Eve's having eaten an apple,—"fair to the sight and pleasant to behold," which God hath placed within her reach.

"**H**ow do you know that?" returned the liberal. "O! you don't profess *our* religion," said the first, "and *therefore* you are wrong."

"**B**ut what is your religion?—How do you prove it? Are any two of yourselves *agreed about it?* Who told you that *you* were *right* and *all others wrong?* And, supposing that you can satisfactorily answer those questions, who gave you leave to 'hang' me, *because* I am a liberal? Answer this, and I'll tell you why I don't support your God"—rejoined the other.

"**O**ur religion has been professed too long to need any proof *now*; and as for the question from whom I received permission to hang you, I reply that *our* religion is established by law," returned the fanatic.

"The first part of your answer is singular enough," replied the philosopher; "I have yet to learn that *time* sanctifies *crime*, and that the circumstance of your juggle having existed for two thousand years is any authority in its favor, or any reason why we should not now inquire into its origin. The same might be said with equal propriety of extortion, rapine, war, murder; in short, of every evil which oppresses and

makes men miserable. What signifies it that a falsehood has existed for 'a thousand long years ;' is it *less* falsehood on that account ? Does it change its nature with age, and become true now, though it was not true at its first promulgation ? You say that *your* religion has 'existed so long that it stands in need of no proof now ;'—I inquire, was it ever proved ? Can any other reason for its continuance be given, than the ignorant taking for granted the prejudice of men ? If this prejudice were once removed, you would soon find yourselves obliged to adduce proof, notwithstanding the 'long time' during which your juggle has 'existed.' The second branch of your replication may be very soon disposed of : your religion certainly *is now* the prevailing, and you persecute accordingly ; the catholic superstition was *once* the 'state religion'—and they did the same ! A few years may see your idol again upset, and the 'obscene astaroth' of your catholic opponents once more uppermost. Their plea of 'established by law' will *then* be as reasonable and as much entitled to respect as *yours is now*. Would you admit paganism, if it were 'established by law ?' If you say *yes*, then I say you are influenced solely by prejudice, and not by reason : if *no*, then why should I receive yours ? Why would you not subscribe to paganism ? Because you don't think it fitting so to do. Why don't I agree to *your* creed ? Because I don't think it proper."

Fanatic :—"Ah ! it is all mighty fine talking—but you'll never convince me."

Friend of truth :—"I am obliged to you for this *admission*, and need nothing further to assure me that your religion is founded on 'falsehood which cannot brook inquiry.' *Why* shall I 'never convince you ?' *Why*, because you feel that the juggle which you support won't admit of argument ; and that you cannot 'give a reason for the hope that is in you.' I did not expect you to argue thus long with me—for seldom, indeed, is it that *we can get a fair hearing* ; and I feel proportionably indebted to you for the patient attention which you have paid to me. I was, of course, aware from the first that you listened, determined in reason's spite to be 'of the same opinion' still.' Perhaps at some future time you will afford me a hearing on the question whether *religion, without morality, or morality, without religion*, is best calculated to make men good and useful, as citizens, fathers, and friends ?".

"It is clear that a man without religion cannot be a moral man," was the answer.

"*How* is it 'clear ?' Have you a shadow of argument to support this assertion ? Can you produce me the names of ten clergymen, from out of the numerous body which your religion has generated, of more exemplary moral conduct than *any* ten of our leading sceptics ? However, we shall meet again in a few days, when I will recur to the subject. In the mean time, ponder on what I have said, and do not let your prejudice determine you '*never to be convinced*'."

Sacrifice.—Any thing which is offered up to heaven, by way of staying the rage of the Deity against sinners ; "and the same lamb which was offered up to appease the appetite of the hungry priest."—*Pigott*

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1827.

LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE FREE PRESS ASSOCIATION.**On the Inconsistencies, Absurdities, and Contradictions of the Bible.** By the Secretary.**LECTURE TENTH.**

[The following lecture should have preceded the one concluded in our last, on the deluge. It was delivered immediately before it, but accidentally misplaced.]

Proceeding in our examination of the Old Testament, we find the following narrative in the beginning of the 5th chapter of Genesis. "This is the book of the *generations of Adam*. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God created he him. Male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam in the day they were created. And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years and begat a son, in his own likeness, and after his own image, and called his name *Seth*."

No one who reads this passage can suppose that Adam had children before the birth of Seth. The chapter begins with what is termed the *creation of Adam*, and calls itself the book of the *generations of Adam*; yet no mention is made in it of such persons as Cain or Abel. According to this account, *Seth* was the *first* born of Adam. But if we are to believe what is said at the close of the 4th chapter, (ver. 25,) he was the *third* child that Eve brought him. "And Adam knew his wife again, and she bare a son and called his name *Seth*: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew." One or other of these accounts must be false; but how is this to be decided? For my part, I consider them both false, and in that opinion I am supported by the well known rule of evidence, that the contradictory testimony of two witnesses, where they both speak of the same occurrences, weakens, if not altogether destroys, the credibility of both.

One thing, at all events, is clearly proved by these conflicting statements; namely, that the person who wrote the first four chapters of Genesis could not be the same who wrote the 5th chapter. The most blundering historian could not have committed himself in such a manner. I have, indeed, already shown, that incontrovertible historical facts exist, which demonstrate that the first four chapters of Genesis did not originally belong to that book, but were prefixed to it several years after Christianity was introduced. Though I consider the whole of the Jewish books fictitious, it was to be expected, at least, that a fiction *historically* told would have been consistent; whereas none of the chapters on which I have remarked have any claim to consistency. Yet we are gravely assured that they were inspired by an infinitely wise and perfectly consistent deity!

In the subsequent parts of the 5th chapter of Genesis, we have an account of nine persons whose ages far surpass the ordinary life of man in modern times. Supernatural theology (observes Palmer) delights in the marvellous; it seeks to plunge the human mind into the depth of difficulties, and surround it with inextricable mysteries. Six of the persons

named in this chapter are said to have lived each of them more than 900 years—an incredible protraction of human life; and, unless it had been supported by irrefutable testimony, or by evidence bearing some analogy to the laws and facts of the physical world, it is unworthy the serious belief of any one pretending to rationality. It is true, that the life of man may vary in many respects in different ages and countries, and its duration may partake visibly of this variation; but not to the extent mentioned in this chapter. Climate, modes of living, and many other circumstances may contribute to extend or shorten the period of human existence. This is a fact within our own observation. In Sweden, a high and healthy country, the inhabitants are said to be remarkable for longevity. It is not uncommon in that country to see ten persons together, whose ages, united, amount to 1000 years—a great age, compared with the life of man in the tropical regions. But, after all, these venerable Swedes are mere children when set off against the Methusalahs of antiquity. There is a vast difference between 100 years and 960; so great a difference, that if the one be supported by substantial proof, the other carries on its face the marks of fraud or of fiction.

But religious fanaticism is a kind of immoral phantom, that claims the right of telling lies for the "glory of God," and for the advancement of its nefarious and detestable purposes. Luxury and intemperance, in civilized countries, have, undoubtedly, in many instances, contributed to shorten the duration of human life; while want, inclemency, famine, and an unprotected condition have left the savage in a state not more favorable to the protraction of his existence. When we survey, however, the history of man, his organization, his physical and moral being, the nature of climates, and the facts furnished by constant experience relative to the duration of human life, we are compelled to pronounce this account of marvellous longevity to be an extravagant fiction of antiquity, inconsistent with the laws and ordinary operations of Nature.

Some have had recourse to vegetable diet to explain the difficulty. But this, even were it true, would not answer the purpose; for we know individuals, and even parts of nations, who live wholly on vegetable food, and yet no such extraordinary effect is produced. Besides, it is not true that they lived on vegetables at that period of the world; for we are told that Nimrod was a "mighty hunter before the Lord," and the whole history of the Jews proves that they dealt much in the blood of beasts as well as the blood of men. Savage nations are always carnivorous; and such was the case as to God's chosen people. The state of knowledge among them was at the lowest ebb, and their celestial illuminations gave them no preeminence over the rest of mankind. If any man ever lived 900 years, it must have been a miracle. But this is inconsistent with the perfections attributed to deity; makes him at war with his own arrangements, and subverts the immutable laws by which the world is governed.

In the beginning of the 6th chapter of Genesis, it is said "And it came to pass when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." Various have been the surmises and calculations on the rapid multiplication of the human species from the first man and woman

To account for this, some have maintained that in the first age of the world females were constantly in the habit of having two or three children at a birth. Epiphanius says, that Adam and Eve had twelve sons, and two daughters named Sava and Azura; the former of whom was the wife of Cain, and the latter of Seth. Philo Annianus, on the other hand, asserts that they had thirteen sons, and five daughters whose names he also places on record. Cedrenus affirms that Adam left thirty-three sons and twenty-seven daughters, but he does not give their names. If, however, as is said in the Bible, Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years, and Eve about the same time, it is not to be doubted that, in the course of so long a life, they had a much greater number of children of both sexes. According to Cedrenus, who, doubtless, acquired the information by particular revelation, Eve weaned her children when they were twelve years old. She also had twins, male and female, annually: consequently in the thirteenth year of the world she had twenty-four children—twelve males and twelve females, to all of whom it is certain, says this same writer, she gave suck. But how could a single mother provide for nearly two dozen babes at the same time, and with her own milk alone? But why do we ask so impertinent a question? Is not every thing possible with God? Are there not numerous mysteries, miracles, and facts in the Bible, and out of it, as incomprehensible as this, which the Christians nevertheless firmly believe to be true? With them, indeed, the greatness of a mystery, and the impossibility of a fact, are the best reasons in the world for crediting them.

In v. 4, it is said "There were giants in the earth in those days; and also, after that when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were, of old, men of renown." Here we have three different kinds of characters: the sons of God, the daughters of men, and giants. But who were these sons of God? Were they a celestial race of beings, of an extraordinary size, sent from the upper regions for the purpose of paying their respects to the female beauties of this terrestrial world? Or were they of earthly origin, belonging to the other race of beings among whom Cain got a wife and built a city? Were they particular favorites of the Most High? After they had taken to themselves wives of the daughters of men, was it this union that led to the production of giants? Or did these giants spring from another source? On all these points we are left in a state of total darkness, although we are told that the narrative was dictated by God for the express purpose of throwing light on these subjects. It is, indeed, evident from the manner in which the whole story is put together, that it is the work of one who possessed neither the spirit of God nor the spirit of common sense to guide him in his labors.

The fiction of the existence of a race of giants was evidently, like that of the angels, introduced into the Jewish books from the orientals, who personified every thing in Nature. Dew and gentle rain they called *Pandrosa* and *Erse*, names indicating mildness and refreshing. Sudden torrents, great waters, and dreadful clouds were designated by more terrific names; they were called *giants* from their destructive property. We read of the giant Briareus, with a hundred arms; of whom it is affirmed that he warred against the gods; that he endeavored to overturn

their thrones by throwing up rocks and mountains, and that he threw a whole island at Jupiter, but that god with "much ado" overpowered the terrible monster, who was the true type of Milton's hero. It is said that this giant was the son of *Ether*, a name which implies to subvert or overturn—a disturber of repose. The child that answers all these descriptions is no other than a *whirlwind*. The name given to the giant Porphyryon meant an *earthquake*; that of Othius, whose father's name was Aello; that is, a *storm*, from which the Greeks made Eolus, the god of *blustering winds*. "These (observes Mackay) were what the ancients used to term the symbols or representations of the storms, or ravages of the elements, with which the inhabitants of the earth were buffeted, when the pole of the earth was in or near the ecliptic. The Jews hearing these things repeated in the triennial festivals of the pagans, did not know why they might not also introduce a few giants into their history."

To be continued.

The Nature of Oaths, and giving Testimony in a Court of Justice.—An action of trover was brought in the marine court, before judge Scott, on the 29th ult. On behalf of the plaintiff a gentleman, a member of the New York *Free Press Association*, was produced to give testimony; but was objected to by the counsel for the defendant, on the grounds that he did not believe in a god, nor in a future state of rewards and punishments.

The honorable and learned judge interfered, and questioned the legal propriety of interrogating the witness on matters appertaining to any particular creed or religious belief. In support of this opinion, he quoted several eminent law authorities, and late decisions regarding the admission of evidence from witnesses who might entertain opinions probably similar to those of the present witness; and observed that the law went even so far as to state that those termed *infidels*, whose veracity could not be impeached, and who held to the solemn obligation and inviolability of an oath, were clearly admissible as evidence.

The counsel for the defendant again urged that, notwithstanding these authorities, they could not see how they applied to the present witness; for they were ready to produce evidence that this gentleman's philosophy taught him to deny the existence of a god altogether, and also a future state of rewards and punishments; and that he had in an especial and public manner avowed his entire disbelief in the god of Moses.

The counsel for the plaintiff here argued on the various points in the law authorities, and decisions quoted by the learned judge, and respecting the undoubted veracity of the witness, whose *affirmation* ought and must be admitted as sufficient testimony in this cause, or any cause whatever.

The counsel for the defendant frankly admitted the veracity of the witness; and stated that, from what they knew of the gentleman, they would as soon take his simple affirmation as the oath of any one. They expressed no further interest in the question than being pressed to urge the objections by their client.

From some suggestions thrown out by the court, at the instigation of the counsel, the witness was permitted to state his opinions of a god, and

a future state of rewards and punishments. He believed, he said, in a great, powerful, and immutable ruling principle inherent in the whole of Nature, which might be said to govern the universe. He cared not, neither did he consider it of any importance, whether this spirit, or principle, was denominated God, or by any other appellation. As to his opinion of a future state of rewards and punishments, he considered this a subject of so abstruse and complicated a nature that it might tend to a high philosophical discussion; which, perhaps, would not be in accordance with the proceedings of this or any other court of justice. Regarding the solemn obligation of an oath, he had no hesitation to say that a false oath, or affirmation, being an evil act, would carry with it or produce its own punishment, as virtue has its own reward; and this punishment might be said to be during the present or any future state of existence. He expressed his inclination to go no farther; when the court asked him if he had scruples to swear upon the Bible? To this he replied that he had. His *affirmation* was accordingly taken, as *legal testimony* in the cause.

MISCELLANEOUS.

State of the Jews.—The Jews have been singularly unfortunate. They shared the oppression and contumely which the Christian sects underwent, as soon as the jealousy of the pagan priests and emperors was excited by the progress of their monotheism; but they in no degree partook of the security or triumphs conquered for the church by Constantine. Their incredulity was considered by orthodox and heretics as of all others the most criminal, nor was it till after the Mahometan conquests that they obtained, in part of Asia, along the southern shores of the Mediterranean and in Spain, a resting place for their feet.

In modern Italy, the earliest haunt of reviving literature and philosophy, the first attempts were made to prepare the European mind for the toleration of Judaism. Simone Lazzurato, of Venice, is mentioned as a pleader of their cause. The friends of the Socini were thought to entertain sentiments very favorable to the Jews; but the interference of the inquisition, in 1546, to suppress the celebrated club of Vincenza, an event preparatory to the exile and dispersion of all the rational Christians of Italy, defrauded them of raising advocates. In the several Italian republics, the Jews enjoyed only a contemptuous protection. Their fate was somewhat more favorable in Poland, and much more favorable in Holland, where Basnage, and, no doubt, others, wrote of them becomingly.

In Germany, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, a celebrated dramatist, by his philosophical plays, *Nathan the Wise*, and *Monk of Lebanon*, attacked the prejudice against Judaism in its fortress, the public mind; while his friend, Moses Mendelsohn, was illustrating the sect, both by his elegant writings and by a well argued defence of general toleration, published under the title of *Jerusalem*. C. W. Dohn, a Prussian, offered, in 1781, to the German public, two small volumes of *Remarks on the Means of Improving the Civil Condition of the Jews*, which called forth

several pamphlets on the same topic, among which those of Schlotzer and Michaelis, no doubt, deserve consultations.

In France, the prejudices of Voltaire against the Jewish religion proved a powerful obstacle to the advances of the philosophic party, in an equitable disposition towards its professors. In 1788, however, the academy of Metz proposed as a prize question, Are there means of rendering the Jews in France usefuller and happier? Zalkind Hourwitz, a Polish Jew, M. Thierry, a counsellor of Nanci, and the Abbe Gregoire, shared the prize, but not the public suffrage. The work of the latter, on the moral, physical, and political regeneration of the Jews, has obtained the more impressive publicity. Among his most distinguished coadjutors in obtaining a legal improvement of their condition, the constitutional assembly of France numbered Mirabeau, Clermont-tonnerre, and Rabaud.

In Great Britian, the well intended conduct of the government, under the protectorate of Cromwell, and under the administration of Pelham, were alike defeated by the fanaticism of the people. Mr. Toland's Naturalization of the Jews in England, is the best antidote of elder date that has descended to us. Tovey and Ockley have also stored up information on these topics.

Of late, Priestly's Letters to the Jews, a work, which, probably, under the mask of pursuing their conversion, had for its object to do away the ungrateful prejudices of religionists against their parent sect, has rendered to them, in the devout world, the same service as Cumberland's Comedy of the Jew in the polished. There can scarcely remain any apprehension among thinking men, that the slightest popular odium would now be incurred by any legislature, if it repealed every law which encroaches upon the political equality of this and other sects.

Sunday in England.—It has been pretty generally alleged by foreigners, that an English Sunday is remarkably *triste*; and that it is a day on which every thing in the shape of amusement is rigorously proscribed. From the manner in which they speak of it, it might naturally be imagined that it was kept with the strictness of the Jewish Sabbath;—and that all secular thoughts and feelings were suspended on this day. It is true, their theatres and concert rooms are shut, but they make themselves ample amends for this sacrifice, their practical rigor being by no means so great as has been imputed to them. The most conscientious mussulman will not refuse to take wine, should some kind interpreter of his wishes silence his scruples, by assuring him that the prohibited beverage is coffee: so is it with John Bull: he has no objection to amusement and enjoyment on a Sunday, provided it be not in the walls of a theatre or opera house. A Turk might suppose, for instance, that the weekly promenade in Hyde Park was some ceremony connected with their public devotion—a religious procession instead of a vanity fair. Then, as has been observed, although John is shocked at the idea of dancing on Sundays, he sees no harm in skating. He perceives no impropriety in discussing politics, scandal, and fashions, in Kensington Gardens. The theatres, indeed, are shut, but the toll gates are open; he may, therefore, either travel or

make parties of pleasure just as he lists. John does not sing; but though there may be harm in a song, there can possibly be none in a newspaper—especially a *Sunday* newspaper. On the contrary, these publications must certainly be very edifying, else how would the most moral and religious people in the world tolerate—we will not say patronize them? But *appropos* of newspapers: we lately happened (says the London Literary Chronicle) to call one Sunday on a good lady, whom we found reprimanding her daughter for having dared to look into a ‘play book,’ which, on inspection, we found to be Dodsley’s *Toy Shop*, certainly not the most immoral production belonging to our stock of dramatic literature. On the table was a Sunday paper, which, on glancing over its contents, we found to contain some luscious extracts from Harriette Wilson’s *Memoirs*, a case of crim. con., an account of a boxing match, two or three indecent police reports, and not a few articles of scandalous gossip; and yet mamma, who was so incensed at her daughter’s indecorum, most unblushingly confessed that she had read the whole paper through;—on which we drily observed, that we supposed the young lady read the ‘play book’ by way of penance.

Dr. Watts.—The following are the circumstances of a situation, in which the late melodious doctor Watts was once found:—accustomed to visit his friends in the country, doctor Watts, some time in the summer of the year 1723, made a journey to the west of England; here he resided at the house of a lady of great piety and great distinction. Being then engaged in preparing some hymns, and part of his logical tracts, for the press, the doctor occasionally forgot the regular dining hour; this happened in particular on a day when the lady had invited some of her friends to spend part of the day in the doctor’s elevated company. Dinner being ready, and the doctor not yet out of his study, the lady sent her servant to announce the visitants to him, and to request at the same time, that he would be ‘so good as to come to dinner.’ The servant complying with his lady’s orders, went directly to the doctor’s study door, and, as was usual for him on such occasions, rapped gently; but no answer—rapped again, still no answer;—in short, he continued at this work so long, that the good old lady began to be uneasy; she sent to know the reason of the delay: the reason is, ‘the doctor has made no motion, nor made any reply since I have been at the door;’ the servant was hereupon commanded to force his way into the study—he does so—finds the doctor at his desk—tells him about dinner and the visitants; but instead of attending to his news, the doctor, so much was he absorbed in metaphysical speculations, could only tell him ‘I am metamorphosed: I am turned into a teapot: here,’ pointing to his arm, ‘is the handle,’ and taking his nose between his fingers, ‘here is the spout,’ and, if you do not take care, the water which shall proceed from me shall drown you.’ At these last words the servant grew impatient, and taking the doctor from his chair, laid him in his arms; but while he thus proceeded to carry him to the dining room, the dreaming doctor exclaimed, ‘I am grown too big—surely I cannot enter at the dining room door.’ Compared to this

religious revery, what are we to think of that recorded of the apostle Paul?

Astrology.—In the infancy of science, astrology and astronomy were confounded, and thought merely to relate to the causes, history, and indications, of the appearances in the heavens; in the course of time the two studies were separated, and astrology became divided into two parts—natural astrology, which relates to prognosticating the state of the weather; and judicial astrology, the adepts to which profess to predict, not only the fates, fortunes, and character of individuals, but even their occupations. In regard to the antiquity of astrology, it is difficult to fix it. The author of *The Astrologer of the Nineteenth Century* says, ‘there can be very little ground for doubting but that Joseph in Egypt, then the chief seat of learning, was enabled, by his skill in astrology, to acquire the favor of Pharaoh, by providing for the emergencies of the Egyptian state in the manner recorded in scripture. We have not seen the nativity of Joseph; but, if we may judge from the affair of Potiphar’s wife, we should say that *Venus* had nothing to do with it. Some writers state, that astrology originated in a barbarous age; while others consider it as a sort of aberration from astronomy, and consequently of much later date. Aristotle, Ptolemy, and Cicero ascribe the origin of astrology to the Egyptians and Babylonians, while Lucian contends that both these nations and the Lybians borrowed it from the Ethiopians. Astrology, however, we suspect has its best claim to antiquity among the Brahmans in India, or the Chinese, with whom it seems coeval with their history.

TO OUR PATRONS.

As the second volume, which will complete the first year of the *Correspondent*, is drawing to a close, we think it necessary to call the attention of our subscribers to the conditions on which we commenced the publication, namely: that those residing in the country should pay one year (\$3) *in advance*, besides postage; and those residing in town, six months *in advance*. These terms, we regret to say, have, in several instances, not been complied with as to the current year, which renders it necessary that we should *discontinue* sending the paper, not only to those who are now in arrear, but to those who may not in future conform to the original conditions.

We should hope that no one has subscribed to the *Correspondent* but such as wished to give it *vital* support; and, as we have neither ecclesiastical treasures nor benefits on which to draw, we trust that every well-wisher to the cause will be prompt in affording us that aid which is so essential to the permanency of the establishment. Our own personal labors have as yet been gratuitous; but, judging from the great interest felt for our success, and relying on the exertions of the friends of liberal principles to extend the circulation of the *Correspondent*, we have no doubt that we shall be ultimately remunerated. Meanwhile, if *city* subscribers were to pay their subscriptions for one year *at our office*, it would

save the expense of collecting, materially promote the prosperity of the concern, and greatly facilitate our labors.

We have a variety of interesting pieces on file, with which we intend to commence our third volume; among which are, "the important Examination of the Scriptures, by Lord Bolingbroke," (originally written in French;) "the Doubts of the Infidels;" "the God of the Jews, or Jehovah Unveiled;" "Watson Refuted," by the author of "the Origin of Christianity, or Truth drawn from Fables;" "the Life of David," &c. And should our encouragement be equal to what we think we are warranted to anticipate, it is our intention to print the *Correspondent* on a finer paper than that on which it is now issued. We have had such ample proofs of good feeling on the part of those with whom we are associated in the great cause of mental emancipation, that we cannot allow ourselves to doubt of their determination to do every thing that is just and necessary to promote an object of such vital importance.

Music.—The Musical Department of the *Free Press Association*, being now organized, the meetings for rehearsal will be held, for the present, in the Temple of Arts, William street, on Sunday morning, at half past 10 o'clock. The members of the Association are earnestly requested to attend; and such of them as have children would do well to bring them along with them.

Science.—It is proposed to commence the regular scientific lectures on the forenoon of Sunday the 23d instant, in the Hall of the *Free Press Association*. We shall mention the hour of meeting in our next.

Books for sale at the office of the *Correspondent*:

Ecce Homo! or a Critical Inquiry into the History of the Life of Jesus of Nazareth—75 cents in boards.

Paine's Theological Works, complete, Svo., bound and gilt—\$2; bds. \$1.50.

***Paine's Age of Reason*, parts I. and II., a new pocket edition, bound and gilt—37 1-2 cents.** * * * A liberal discount will be given to those who purchase a quantity of the *Age of Reason*.

***The People's Rights Reclaimed*; being an Exposition of the unconstitutionality of the Law of the State of New York compelling the observance of a religious Sabbath—25 cents.**

View of the Metaphysical and Physiological Arguments in favor of Materialism—25 cents.

The Scripture Doctrine of Materialism—25 cents.

* * * Orders for books, in every department of literature, punctually attended to.

The **CORRESPONDENT** is published at No. 15 Chamber street. Terms, three dollars per annum, payable in advance.—**GEORGE H. EVANS & CO.**, Printers, 264 Greenwich street, where Printing, in all its branches, is neatly and expeditiously executed, on reasonable terms.